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Atari Online News, Etc.
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~ No to Facebook Log-ins ~ People Are Talking! ~ Zynga Copied Sims!
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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If you're a fan of the Olympics, it's been a terrific week so far to watch the contests. The only disappointment so far has been the fact that most of us have to watch the Games after the fact - taped for a later airing. That's fine as long as you don't watch the news or see the results online!

The U.S., as a citizen myself, has been doing very well. Lots of medal winners from the New England area, my part of the country. But seeing athletes from all over the world competing against each other for the enjoyment of competition, and not for the almighty dollar (or substitute your currency standard here) is terrific change of pace.

So, if you're interested in an incredible diversion from all of the bad news in the world going on these days, pick up your television remote and find some Olympics coverage - there's gotta be some sports coverage that you'll enjoy!

Until next time...

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Commodore 64 Turns 30: What Do Today's Kids Make of It?

It is 30 years since the Commodore 64 went on sale to the public.

The machine was hugely successful for its time, helping to encourage personal computing, popularise video games and pioneer homemade computer-created music.

The $595 (£399) device took its name from its US maker, Commodore International, and the fact it had 64 kilobytes of RAM memory.

The firm noted that made it substantially cheaper than other personal computers on the market offered by IBM, Apple and Atari.

Commodore highlighted the fact that since it had designed and manufactured its own chips it had been able keep costs down - and the advantage helped it become the best-selling model in North America.

In Europe it faced competition from two cheaper eight-bit rivals released over the previous year: the BBC Micro and Sinclair Spectrum.

The Commodore’s ability to display 16 colours, smoothly scroll graphics and play back music through its superior SID (sound interface device) chip - even while loading programs off tape - helped win over fans, but it did not become the market leader until the late 1980s.

Debates continue to this day about which was the superior system - but what would today’s youth make of the C64?

BBC News invited Commodore enthusiast Mat Allen to show schoolchildren his carefully preserved computer, at a primary school and secondary school in London.

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Suit Says Zynga Copied ’Sims Social’ Game!
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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Suit Says Zynga Copied ’Sims Social’ Game

US videogames giant Electronic Arts said Friday it had filed suit claiming Zynga’s game "The Ville" illegally copied the life simulator "The Sims Social."

"The core legal issue is our belief that Zynga infringed copyrights to our game, The Sims Social," said Lucy Bradshaw, general manager of EA’s Maxis label.

"The legal reasons are solid. But for creative teams who feel that their hard work and imaginations have been ripped off, there’s obviously an emotional element too."

Bradshaw said that when Zynga’s game was introduced in June, "the infringement of The Sims Social was unmistakable to those of us at Maxis as well as to players and the industry at large."

She added that "the copying was so comprehensive that the two games are, to an uninitiated observer, largely indistinguishable. Scores of media and bloggers commented on the blatant mimicry."

Zynga, a San Francisco-based social games maker which grew from the Facebook platform, vowed to fight the lawsuit.

"It’s unfortunate that EA thought that this was an appropriate response to our game, and clearly demonstrates a lack of understanding of basic copyright principles," Zynga general counsel Reggie Davis said in a statement.

"It’s also ironic that EA brings this suit shortly after launching SimCity Social which bears an uncanny resemblance to Zynga’s CityVille game. Nonetheless, we plan to defend our rights to the fullest extent possible and intend to win with players."

The Sims Social is among the life-simulation games from Silicon Valley-based EA.

The Ville, one of the top games played on Facebook, has been described as "very similar" to The Sims Social but "not a complete clone" by a reviewer at the website Inside Social Games.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

HP Wins Ruling in Court Battle with Oracle

Computer maker Hewlett-Packard says it has won a big victory in its court battle to force Oracle to continue making software for one of its server lines.

A California state court on Wednesday proposed an order that would force Oracle to support HP’s servers.

Oracle Corp., the maker of database and other corporate software, says it will appeal the decision.

Last summer, Oracle said it would stop developing new versions of its software for servers running Intel Corp.’s Itanium processors, because it believes the chips would soon go out of production.

Hewlett-Packard Co., which makes server computers based on Itanium, disagreed about its future and sued Oracle, saying it had a contractual obligation to support Itanium.

Hackers Hit Reuters, Post Fake Blog on Syria

Hackers took over the blogging platform of the Reuters news agency and posted "fabricated" stories said to include an interview with a Syrian

rebel leader, the company said Friday.

"Reuters.com was a target of a hack on Friday," said a statement from parent firm Thomson Reuters.

"Our blogging platform was compromised and fabricated blog posts were falsely attributed to several Reuters journalists."

Among the fake postings was a purported interview with the head of the Free Syrian Army, who was quoted as saying that rebel forces were pulling back after clashes in the city of Aleppo.

Reuters said it did not carry out that interview, that the posting has been deleted and that the blogging platform was taken offline as it addresses the problem.

Syrian opposition fighters told a news conference Friday in Iraq they would not withdraw from Aleppo, the northern city which has been under attack by regime forces.

Illinois Employers Can’t Ask for Facebook Logins

Illinois is making it illegal for employers to ask job-seekers to hand over passwords to their social networking accounts.

Gov. Pat Quinn signed the measure into law Wednesday during an event at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

In their efforts to vet job applicants, some companies and government agencies have been asking to log in to a prospective employee’s accounts on sites like Facebook and Twitter to have a look around.

Critics say that amounts to a serious invasion of privacy.

The Illinois law does allow bosses to view public information not restricted by privacy settings on a site.

Several other states are considering similar bans, including Washington, Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey. Two U.S. senators have asked the U.S. Department of Justice to review whether such requests are legal.

Google Buying Social-Media Startup Wildfire

Google is buying a company that specializes in social media marketing as it intensifies competition with Facebook for ad dollars and attention.

The company, Redwood City, Calif.-based Wildfire, helps businesses such as Cirque du Soleil and Spotify manage social media efforts across the Internet.

It’s an important area for Google as people spend more time on social networks such as Facebook and as advertisers follow them. Google’s social network, Google Plus, hasn’t had the traction that Facebook Inc. enjoys. Wildfire will let Google play a role whether the ad campaign is on Google

Plus, Facebook, Twitter or elsewhere.

Wildfire’s co-founders and other staff will join Google Inc. The deal’s financial details were not disclosed.

In recent months, Oracle Corp. and Salesforce.com Inc. also have reached deals to buy similar startups.

Windows 8 Has Reached The RTM Milestone

Today, I am excited to announce that Windows 8 has been released to manufacturing (RTM)! This means we ve completed the product development and testing of the product and have started handing off the final code to our OEM partners. They can now begin preparing new Windows 8 PCs and devices they ll introduce starting with General Availability. For more on RTM, I suggest reading this blog post from Steven Sinofsky on the Building Windows 8 blog.

So when will folks be able to get their hands on the new Windows 8 RTM code?

People will be able get Windows 8 starting on October 26th either by upgrading for $39.99 or on a new PC or device. And if you buy an eligible Windows 7 PC today, you will be able to purchase an upgrade to Windows 8 Pro for $14.99 (U.S.) through the Windows Upgrade Offer.

However, we have a number of programs that provides various audiences early access to the Windows 8 RTM code to help prepare for Windows 8 as it enters the marketplace this fall:

August 15th: Developers will be able to download the final version of Windows 8 via your MSDN subscriptions.
August 15th: IT professionals testing Windows 8 in organizations will be able to access the final version of Windows 8 through your TechNet subscriptions.
August 16th: Customers with existing Microsoft Software Assurance for Windows will be able to download Windows 8 Enterprise edition through the Volume License Service Center (VLSC), allowing you to test, pilot and begin adopting Windows 8 Enterprise within your organization.
August 16th: Microsoft Partner Network members will have access to Windows 8.
August 20th: Microsoft Action Pack Providers (MAPS) receive access to Windows 8.
September 1st: Volume License customers without Software Assurance will be able to purchase Windows 8 through Microsoft Volume License Resellers.

Please note: if a program you are in is not mentioned, please be patient as dates for Windows 8 RTM code availability for other programs will be communicated when the information becomes available.

For more information on what the RTM of Windows 8 means for businesses including Volume License customers, see this blog post from Erwin Visser on the Windows for your Business Blog. This post, also from Erwin, on how Windows 8 will work in your business is also a good post to read.

On August 15th, developers will be able to visit the Windows Dev Center to

get access to all the tools and resources they need including the final build of Visual Studio 2012 to design, build, and sell apps in the Windows Store. Keep your eyes on the Windows Store for developers blog and Windows 8 app developer blog for more information. I am super excited to see the kinds of apps developers build for Windows 8! If you have the Windows 8 Release Preview installed, you can already check out some apps developers have created for Windows 8 today.

In the meantime, if you d like to give a pre-release version of Windows 8 a test-run, feel free to download the Windows 8 Release Preview! You can also read about my personal experience with the Windows 8 Release Preview here (hint: I put it on all my PCs!).

Samsung Will Unveil New Galaxy Note in Late August

According to Reuters and a variety of other sources, Samsung is expected to announce the follow-up to the successful Galaxy Note phablet at an event on August 29.

Reports are speculating that the new Galaxy Note will feature a 5.5-inch display, which is slightly larger than the current one, as well as a speedier processor and a better camera, though other details are somewhat sparse right now. There s a chance a new Galaxy tablet will emerge, too.

The announcement of the new Note will occur at the Samsung Mobile Unpacked event in Berlin just a few days before the IFA European consumer electronics trade show. It s also likely to happen before Apple announce the next iPhone 5 and possibly iPad Mini. Samsung and Apple remain big rivals in the smartphone and tablet space, and are currently embroiled in numerous patent battles.

Appolicious licenses its algorithmic-based app search and recommendation technology to third parties including Samsung.

Google Delays Nexus Q Launch

Google has just let us know that it is delaying the launch of the Nexus Q as it works to improve the device. The Nexus Q order page on Google Play has been taken down, and now simply leaves customers with a note that the device "is coming soon."

It’s not all bad news for those who pre-ordered, however: Google has informed us that those who did reserve the device will be receiving it in its current form for free. This unit is what we reviewed and what was given out to Google I/O attendees last month, and it is now being called a "preview" device. It’s unknown whether or not these preview devices will be upgradable down the line, but Google says that it will be sending out the Nexus Q dev units to pre-order customers "soon."

We gave the Android-based media streamer a 5.0, and the device was widely criticized by the press due to its premium price tag and minimal feature set. Its $300 price-point was due to its highly-publicized US-based manufacture. We haven’t received any details from Google clueing us in as to how it will alter the device, but the email sent to pre-order customers

(below) suggests that the changes will primarily come on the software side. Currently, the Nexus Q can only play back content from Android devices, and lacks its own user interface. If we had to guess, we'd say that Google will address that issue before it commits to a re-release.

We have an important update about your Nexus Q pre-order.

When we announced Nexus Q at Google I/O, we gave away devices to attendees for an early preview. The industrial design and hardware were met with great enthusiasm. We also heard initial feedback from users that they want Nexus Q to do even more than it does today. In response, we have decided to postpone the consumer launch of Nexus Q while we work on making it even better.

To thank you for your early interest, we'd like to extend the Nexus Q preview to our pre-order customers and send you a free device. If you had other items in your order, your credit card will be charged for those items only.

Your Nexus Q will be on its way soon and you will receive a notification and tracking number from Google Play when it ships.

The Nexus Q Team

New Plug-in Blurs Your Facebook Photos So Strangers Can t See Them

McAfee social protectionWhile most of us have a Facebook profile by now, not all of us are keen on making every aspect of our life public knowledge as participation. Given how Facebook is built around sharing just about every detail about our lives, that can be tricky to reconcile. That's why computer security firm McAfee has designed Social Protection, a browser add-on designed to keep strangers from viewing your personal pictures.

The browser plug-in will blur all your photos, allowing only those who you approve to see them. Once protected, photos can only be viewed by those who have the plug-in installed. The plug-in will also alert you when a friend uploads a photo of you, even if you haven't been tagged in it, so you can request it be removed or similarly protected. You will even be able to prevent others from taking screenshots of your photos using the print screen function.

Social Protection will be available by the end of August for Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Chrome on the PC. The service will soon expand to Mac users, with iOS and Android users getting the functionality by the end of the year. Of course, you don't have to wait for this app to protect yourself on Facebook you can edit your Facebook privacy settings to decide who can and can't see your photos today.

The Daily Tablet Newspaper Lays Off Third of Staff

News Corp. is laying off nearly a third of its staff at The Daily, the digital-only news publication championed by company founder Rupert Murdoch.

It will cut 50 of its roughly 170 employees and focus resources on its more popular features. It says the move reflects the "changing business environment for news and media."

The Daily will stop reporting on sports and instead use content from partners such as Fox Sports. The standalone Opinion section is being scrapped. Instead it will publish opinion pieces in news pages from time to time.

It will also publish pages in the portrait format only, instead of horizontally as well, to reflect the preference of most readers.

The Daily charges 99 cents per week or $40 a year. It’s available only for mobile devices.

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